

Memories of Bargersville

April 26, 2012

Jeff Beck

4660 North Road 725 West

Bargersville In 46106

317.422.9923

Switzer canning factory was owned by William (Bill) Switzer and his wife. I cannot recall wife's name although she worked in office of the business. Switzer's, no children to my knowledge lived in large two story home at North East corner of Harriman and Carlisle Streets in Bargersville. Home is now owned by Jarvis family.

Canning factory was located on Old Plank Road just west of Railroad tracks, north side of road. Business was very productive in 1950's/60's with many season workers employed. Workers include those picking tomatoes and those from community working for a few extra dollars. Housewives seemed to enjoy the work and yes the money. Friend, Don Hendricks worked for Bill Switzer during summers and still talks friendly about experience, approximately early 1950's. Don and his parents lived in Bargersville many years with Don moving to Greenwood Indiana after world war two and beginning his marriage.

Scales and office of canning factory was very close to railroad tracks and Old Plank Road (SR144). Office was not more than 16 feet by 16 feet brick building with scale on east side of office. Canning factory being shut down the office became home of Boger's florist, Delbert and Rosemary Boger were owners, daughter helped also.

Farmers in community would often lease their ground to Bill on annual bases for growing tomatoes. Jess Findlay and Jeff Beck worked for Bill a

couple summers spraying tomatoes with goal of keeping plants bug and disease free. Tractor driven by Jess was Farmall Super M and I would work the sprayer. Sprayer was large tank with boom arm on side spraying liquid on plants. Bill would often come to check on us driving a large Chrysler automobile and smoking a cigar. Bill was said to enjoy strong spirits but I cannot verify.

Switzer family would provide housing for migrant workers coming from Texas and other areas near that state. Housing was mainly small portable buildings similar to what we now call yard barns. I am not sure how many lived in housing for a two month or close period. Tomatoes once harvested workers would move on to another area earning a living along the way. Housing was located across from canning factory between Schoolhouse Road and North Street. Canning factory building is similar in shape and size as it was when constructed, currently owned by Nichols Cabinet Company. Site of houses was also site of Bargersville School. I led group to obtain funds for historical marker for the school. Residents of community remember going to school and \$1200 was collected with trouble.

Midge Baker and other women from Smith Valley United Brethren Church would come down weekly to help children learn English and also bring food for the migrant workers families. Midge stated migrant workers would often go to Franklin for groceries.

Hamper was name of container used to house the tomatoes picked for processing at factory. Memory says workers were paid 10 cents per hamper. I have no idea how tally was kept or how funds were distributed for harvested tomatoes. Days were long for both workers harvesting and those processing tomatoes

Workers used outdoor toilets, not sure of showers. Story has been told many times about toilets being turned over during Halloween time.

Resident who was teenager at the time was said to be the one who turned over toilets, name was David Windisch. I have asked David and he has repeatedly said he was not the culprit and did not know who did the vandalism. Toilets were turned over every year.

Death of Bill Switzer and his wife made their home being sold. I am not sure who was recipient of sale and or contents. Charles Stewart attend sale of items remaining in Switzer home and purchased videos of Franklin, Banta and Bangersville. I obtained copy of videos and had it converted to digital for historical purpose., combined into one DVD. I have enclosed copy of DVD for town of Bangersville's keeping. John Richardson, owner of Mallow Run Winery parents were friends of Switzers and could provide more information, especially the Switzers.

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Pool Hall in Bargersville was located just north of town hall near Bennett tool and die. Doncil Core ran the pool hall for many years. Snooker was the favorite game; fail to remember cost of game.

Dan Deer (Yogi) and Dennis Houpt were two of the best pool/snooker players and were high school age at the time. Jimmy Horton and myself would ride my small motorcycle to town after school to play pool and just watch. Motor cycle had to be pushed to start and we often rode during colder months. Not small but as teenagers guess we didn't care.

I remember walking from our home on County Road 450 West to Parkers grocery after a very heavy snow storm. Jim Horton, Steve Whitmore and I walked across fields to town. Snow was up to our waist and wading very difficult with drifts. Milk and bread were purchased and honestly just kid stuff to do, no real reason to make the walk. Hopefully one of our parents called Parker's making sure they would be open. Team of walkers stopped at home of friend Randy Whitaker on Tresslar Street to warm up before walk home.

Failed to mention Selch's gun club in earlier discussion of their hardware store. Gun Club was located on old Plank Road just west of

Selch's two story home. Men would gather at certain time I believe on Saturday to shoot at stationary targets and clay pigeons thrown from a cover shelter in fiend. Turkey shoot was main focus as men would use shotgun to place pellets in center of target and winner won a prize of meat or money. Full or tight choke gun best for match. Men paid to be able to shoot thus money for prizes and profit for Selch's. Building was just a wooden structure with windows opening out east side for shooting without being hindered by wind. Clay pigeon shooting was outside with concrete pads to stand on and maintain equal distance for fairness.

I recall going to home of my aunt and uncle, Warren and Grace Whitmore who lived on Indiana Street for Halloween trick or treating. Walking down the street was fun as we knew every home and greatly anticipated the treats. Cousin Steve Whitmore went with me. Homeowner Clara Ford home was the favorite, candy, ice cream cone and a coke. Clara was music teacher with full head of white hair, sister of Bank teller Roxy Voiles.

Memories of Bargersville

April 25, 2012

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Bargersville was a happening place during my childhood. Time of reference is mid 1950's to mid 1960's. Memory will tell the story of young boy going to Bargersville for haircut, pharmacy for medicine and candy, grocery, banks and grain elevator.

Two grain elevators in Bargersville where local farmers could buy feed for the livestock and also sell grain for income. Farm Bureau Coop and Umbarger's where downtown, Coop to south and Umbarger's to the north. Coop as it was called seemed to be the most popular, at the time not sure of reason why. Growing a little older I found out Coop paid dividends by stock certificates and also paid a penny or two higher than Umbarger's for sold grain. Stock was only redeemable at death thus like a live insurance policy or death insurance. Maurice Paddock ran the Coop along with other men but Maurice is recalled. Thurman Mudd worked at Coop unloading grain and helping farmers load feed.

Harvest time long lines of trucks with grain and tractors pulling sometimes two wagons of grain would be lined up north of Coop parallel to railroad tracks. Line went often times back to Umbarger's. I recall Bruce Croas local farmer getting out of Coop line and driving to Umbargers to sell his grain. Bruce said Umbarger's owner Walt refused to buy Bruce's grain and told him to get back in Coop Line.

Coop had a large office area where you could buy supplies needed for the farm such as medicine for the livestock and other related items. Local farmers such as Dave Paris, Maurice Ratliff, Joe Combs, Boon Morris and Earl Beck, my father would loaf in office area during slowing farming times and rainy days. Stories of yields would be told and maybe farmer purchased new equipment.

Betting at Coop was interesting because farmers would buy bottle cokes out of machine and bet on which bottle was made the longest distance away from Bartersville. Coke bottles had city and state where it was made on bottom of bottle. Winner got a free coke and about 25 cents per farmer. Salted peanuts were often added to cokes when bottle full. Difficult to get peanuts out when bottle was empty. Lance peanuts were used as there was a container on office counter selling peanuts, crackers etc.

Coop was located on southwest corner of Main Street in Bartersville, corner of Baldwin and Harriman. Moving to Northeast corner of street was the Bartersville State Bank. Workers include Bob Myers, Roxy Voiles and Marjorie Stout; Leo Roe also worked as bank officer. Marjorie kept a record of bank events such as birthday of workers, new hires and promotions. I recall my father borrowing \$1000 upon occasion and paying it back at one time with interest, called a six month note.

North of bank was Weddle's pharmacy, owners were Francis and Alice Weddle. Couple had two daughters if memory correct, names not recalled. Walking into store from street there was an incline on the wooden floor, almost like a handicap ramp. Cash register was about half way inside store on south side. I recall register because candy rack was just across the aisle and ice cream was behind register. Round stools allowed customers to stop and relax while having ice cream of just while waiting on prescription to be filled. Alice normally ran

register and Francis did the Rx's. Couple lives just off South Street near Grimm's home.

Moving north was Dunn's store. I recall little about Dunn's since my parents never went into the store if memory correct. Grocery items inside but mainly a lunch counter and pin ball machine local kids used, cost a nickel to play.

Continuing north was Kelso's barber shop, Wiley Kelso owned shop as I recall.

Parker's grocery was next, valuable business to the community. Carts were located on the left as you enter front door and three aisles of grocery items. Meat counter was in the back with everything from bacon to T-bone steak available. Person could buy a side of beef if desired or just have a sandwich made to order. Lewis Parker was owner and butcher with wife Nevelyn Parker running register. Employee Rosie Kephart helped with meat counter and register.

I recall chewing gum was 6 packs for 25 cents. Locals could charge purchase if funds not available of child would come in to get item and once Friday came bill must be paid. Friday was pay day for most in community not farming. Locals would buy most of grocery items at Parker's as no other grocery close. Parker's had a son Joe but I do not recall him working at store. Joe moved to Florida many years ago.

Parker family lived north of town on SR 135 between Smokey Row Road and Stones Crossing Road, white two story home. Family moved to Bargarville City near Easy Street and upon death of Lewis Nevlyn moved to smaller home on Carlisle. Nevelyn missed very few Center Grove Girls basketball games and was honored by school for her efforts.

Bargersville Building and Loan was next door to Parker's and managed by Bob Cline and assisted by Rosie Wise. BBL would provide mortgages and saving deposits. I recall when my wife Sharon and I built our first home getting mortgage from Bob. We borrowed \$22,500.00 for thirty years with payment of \$180 per month, year 1974. My father told me I would never live to see that debt paid off, dad was wrong. Bob lived in town of Bargersville, west side on Dressler, wife Zee, son Bob and two daughters, names not recalled. Rosie and husband Jeff live just south of Post Office.

Selch's hardware was owned by Willie Selch, family lived on Old Plank Road, large two story home just east of railroad tracks, north side of road. I do not recall seeing Willie's wife at business. Selch's store sold guns, fishing tackle, all types of, nails nuts and bolts by pound. Business also fixed broken window panes, installed screens and cut lumber. Furniture and appliance department was on north side of store. Nails were under counter in binds so just grab a handful as needed.

Selch's son-in-law Jim Burgress ran the store along with employee Rod Tunks. Mr. Selch was short and little overweight and lacking full head of hair.

Little remembered north of Selch's couple of buildings with one housing the Masonic Lodge No 679 and Order of Eastern Star. OES is women's organization with two men being needed in attendance where business is carried on due to Masonic rules. Tavern north of Lodge was owned by several local men. Tavern was noted for hog fries, wings and other free food items on certain nights, helped bring in beer customers. Occasional fight but overall tavern has been a good neighbor to the town.

Tavern brought in what kids called the town drunks, sorry, not best term but what we called them at the time. Two men of reference were the Totten brothers, George and Booter. Booter was blind. Men lived south of town on land they owned with their father. Property now owed by Foley lumber. Foley's built Totten brothers a small home they lived in before their death. I do not recall men ever causing trouble just drinking and hanging around. Totten's father was in gun shoot out per my father in front current town hall but story for another day. Third brother supposedly lived in Indianapolis and died after jumping onto side of moving railroad car and falling underneath.

Adjoining tavern was Cornelius repair shop, owned by Wilbur Cornelius. Wilbur would pump gas and fix your car or truck. Business employed Charlie Daniely also to help repair equipment. Wilbur friendly man with slight limp, not sure where he lived. Two daughters and wife were Wilbur's family. Building has been torn down and site if not parking lot for Umbarger's employees and overflow used by tavern customers. Wilbur moved his business to Sr135/144 intersection selling Marathon fuel and repairs continued. Site is currently being used as car wash

Nuffer's leather shop was also in building used by Wilbur Cornelius, not sure who owned building. Carl Nuffer ran the shop and repaired shoes, saddles and mostly leather items. Carl and his family lived on corner of Indiana Street and Harriman Street, near town hall. Carl's son, Freddie was one of the water tower story boys. Carl's wife gave piano lessons, Bess Nuffer.

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Chelsea Doty was town marshal of Bargersville during late 1950's and into the mid 1960's. I am not sure of exact time of service. I was stopped by Chelsea shortly after obtaining my driver's license in 1965 to speeding. No ticket issued but my parents were notified.

Story being shared was spoken to me by George Harrell of Bargersville. George grew up just south of SR135 and Smokey Row Road. George was graduated from Center Grove High School in 1954 and along with being a nationalized recognized sheep judge farmed all his life.

Chelsea worked evening's and one of his duties was to fill the water tower at corner of Morgantown Road and Smokey Row Road. Tower was south of home owned by Williams's family and north of home owned by Ernie Fulmer, east side of the road.

Traveling to Smith Valley Chelsea turned on pump to fill Morgantown Road water tower. Chelsea returned to tower and parked his patrol car under the overflow line, taking a nap while tower filled. Tower, once filled allowed water to overflow and Chelsea was off to Smith Valley to turn off pump. Tower supplied water at that time to town of Bargersville. George told me local boys named Freddie Nuffer, Virgil Tunks, George and others I cannot recall decided to have some fun at Chelsea Doty's expense. Boys at night connected many garden hoses to neighborhood water outlet and connect to overflow pipe with tape. Chelsea once asleep the boys let a few minutes passed and turned on

water hose. Chelsea thinking tower was full was off to turn off pump. I never knew if lights and siren on patrol car was used. Prank went on for several days until towns people started to complain about NO water. Prank was discovered when a parent entered Selch's Hardware store to buy hose, seemed hoses from farm were missing. George never said if boys got in trouble or if anybody found out who did the prank.